

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions in the application:

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Claims 1-23 (withdrawn)

Claims 24-30 (canceled)

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Claim 31 (currently amended): An article having first and second ~~exterior~~ surface regions defined by first and second homogeneous layers, respectively, each homogeneous layer comprising a carbide of at least one element selected from the group comprising B, Si, Ti, V, Cr, Zr, Nb, Mo, Hf, Ta and W and the element carbon, the first homogeneous layer having a relatively lower proportion of carbon and the second homogeneous layer having a relatively higher proportion of carbon in comparison to the first homogeneous layer, the second ~~exterior~~ surface region having a lower coefficient of friction than the first ~~exterior~~ surface region.

Claim 32 (currently amended): An article having first and second different ~~exterior~~ surface regions, the first ~~exterior~~ surface region being defined by a first homogeneous layer being formed on the first surface region and a second homogeneous layer being formed on said second surface region, said first homogeneous layer and said second homogeneous layer each consisting of a carbide of one or more elements of the group comprising B, Si, Ti, V, Cr, Zr, Nb, Mo, Hf, Ta and W together with the element carbon, there being a relatively lower proportion of carbon in said first homogeneous layer than in said second homogeneous layer and in an amount selected to achieve a relatively high coefficient of friction at said first ~~exterior~~ surface region and a relatively higher proportion of carbon in said second homogeneous layer in comparison to said first homogeneous layer and in an amount selected to achieve a relatively low coefficient of friction at said second ~~exterior~~ surface region.

Claim 33 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 32 wherein said one or more elements is boron, said first homogeneous layer on said first surface region containing at least approximately 80 at% boron and a remainder containing 20 at% of carbon and incorporated hydrogen and unavoidable contaminants and said second homogeneous layer on said second surface region containing approximately 55 at% boron and a remainder containing 45 at% of carbon and incorporated hydrogen and unavoidable contaminants.

Claim 34 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 32 wherein said one or more elements is tungsten, said first homogeneous layer on said first surface region containing at least approximately 50 at% tungsten and a remainder containing 50 at% of carbon and incorporated hydrogen and unavoidable contaminants and said second homogeneous layer on said second surface region containing approximately 15 at% tungsten and a remainder containing 85 at% of carbon and incorporated hydrogen and unavoidable contaminants.

Claim 35 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 32 including a bonding layer formed on the said first and second surface regions beneath said respective first and second homogeneous layers.

Claim 36 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 35, wherein the bonding layer has a thickness in the range from about 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$  to about 1  $\mu\text{m}$  on said first and second surface regions.

Claim 37 (previously presented): An article method in accordance with claim 32, wherein the first and second homogeneous layers have a thickness on said first and second surface regions between about 1  $\mu\text{m}$  and 5  $\mu\text{m}$ .

Claim 38 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 32, wherein the second homogeneous layer is a multi-layer structure comprising alternate layers of a carbide of one or more of the said elements and carbon, a layer thickness of each carbon layer in the alternate layers being in the range between approximately 1 nm and approximately 20 nm.

Claim 39 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 38, wherein a thickness of each carbon layer is in the range from about 2 nm to 4 nm.

Claim 40 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 38, wherein the alternate layers comprise a topmost layer of carbon.

Claim 41 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 38, including a plurality of carbon layers, and wherein the topmost layer of carbon is thicker than other layers of carbon.

Claim 42 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 41, wherein the topmost layer of carbon has a thickness of approximately 500 nm.

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cont.

Claim 43 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 38, wherein the carbon of the carbon layers has predominantly  $sp_3$  bonds.

Claim 44 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 38, wherein the carbide layers each have a thickness in the range between about 1 and 3 nm.

Claim 45 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 44, wherein the carbide layers each have a thickness of about 2 nm.

Claim 46 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 35, wherein the bonding layer is a layer selected from the group comprising Cr and Ti.

Claim 47 (previously presented): An article in accordance with claim 35, wherein the first and second homogeneous layers have a thickness on said first and second surface regions, including a thickness of said bonding layer, between about 1  $\mu m$  and 5  $\mu m$ .

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